

J Mitchell  
B. S. J.

**United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Region V  
POLLUTION REPORT**

**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2008

**From:** James Mitchell, OSC

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



310346

**Subject:** Initiation of Action

Des Plaines, IL Mobile Home Mercury Response



<b>POLREP No.:</b>	1	<b>Site #:</b>	B5PV
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	8/7/08 thru 8/11/08	<b>D.O. #:</b>	
<b>Start Date:</b>		<b>Response Authority:</b>	CERCLA
<b>Mob Date:</b>	8/7/2008	<b>Response Type:</b>	Emergency
<b>Completion Date:</b>		<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL
<b>CERCLIS ID #:</b>		<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Action
<b>RCRIS ID #:</b>		<b>Contract #</b>	

**Site Description**

Mr. [REDACTED] recently purchased a mobile home at the Touhy Mobile Home Park. Mr. [REDACTED] was steam cleaning his carpets and noticed beads of mercury in the bathroom and on the kitchen floor. After this discovery he notified the National Response Center (NRC). OSC Mitchell reviewed the NRC Spill Report and contacted Ken Runkle at the Illinois Department of Public Health regarding the residential mercury spill. Together they called Mr. [REDACTED] about the mercury discovery. Mr. [REDACTED] stated that he recently purchased the mobile home about 10 days ago. After steam cleaning the carpets, he noticed beads of mercury in the toilet from the steam cleaner. He then looked for more mercury inside the home.

Based on this information, IDPH requested U.S.EPA's assistance to screen Mr. [REDACTED] home for mercury. OSC Mitchell along with START Markadel met Mr. [REDACTED] sister, [REDACTED] at 5:00pm on 8/7/2008 to gain access to the home and screen it for mercury. Mr. [REDACTED] arrived home at 6:00pm.

OSC Mitchell and START Markadel arrived at the Touhy Mobile Home Park at 5:00 pm. A Lumex mercury vapor analyzer was used to screen the property and mobile home for mercury vapors. Mercury screening was first performed outside the mobile home. Readings inside a 96 gallon garbage can and front lawn were below 0.3 micro-grams per cubic meter (ug/m3). Mercury vapor levels along the concrete walkway and stairs into the mobile home ranged from 10 to 60 ug/m3. Visible mercury could be seen in the soil adjacent to the stairs and on the stairs. PPE was donned prior to entering the home. Breathing zone measurements were collected in each room of the home. All measurements collected in the home were

greater than 55 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) along with EPA has developed action levels for indoor mercury vapors in homes. The suggested action level acceptable for occupancy is 1 ug/m<sup>3</sup>.

In consultation with IDPH, OSC Mitchell told Mr. [REDACTED] that his home is not safe for occupancy and recommended that he not live in the home until mercury vapors could be brought down to acceptable levels. Mr. [REDACTED] agreed and said he can stay with a relative. OSC Mitchell then discussed the steps that would be necessary to remove mercury from the home as well as the associated cleanup costs. Mr. [REDACTED] said he did not have the financial means to remove mercury from his home as requested that EPA assist him with the cleanup.

### **Current Activities**

OSC Mitchell mobilized EPA cleanup contractors, Environmental Quality Management (EQM) and Weston START contractor(s) to the Des Plaines mobile home on Friday August 8, 2008. At 10:00am, OSC Mitchell performed a health and safety briefing and outlined the tasks to be performed. Level C PPE with mercury vapor cartridges would be worn in until engineering controls bring mercury vapor levels down below 12.5 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. The following tasks were outlined by OSC Mitchell:

1. Removal of elemental mercury from soil and stairs utilizing a mercury vacuum.
2. Wash stairs and walkway with mercury chelating agent i.e. Mersorb□
- 3.a) Bag personnel possessions and furniture and remove them from house.
  - b) Allow them to bake in the sun
  - c) Screen bags and items for the presence of mercury vapors with Lumex.
4. Cut, bag and remove all carpeting from home for disposal.
5. Vacuum all elemental mercury from home.
6. Wash all sub floors with Mersorb□
7. Place homeowners personnel possessions inside 2 onsite storage containers
8. Return to the home on Monday August 11, 2008 and screen the home again for mercury vapors.

On Monday August 11, 2008 ERS crews again vacuumed additional elemental mercury from the home. Large air movers were also placed inside the home in an effort to remove any pockets of mercury vapors. OSC Mitchell and START contractor Jay Rauh then screened the floor of the home for mercury vapors with the Lumex. Mercury vapors in excess of 30 ug/m<sup>3</sup> were encountered along the walls of the bedroom, kitchen and inside the HVAC return air vent. The house was closed up, heat turned on and breathing zone measurements were collected. All rooms of the home exhibited mercury vapors in excess of 25ug/m<sup>3</sup>. In order to reduce mercury vapors to acceptable ATSTR occupancy levels, it was determined that removal of the sub-floor, walls and HVAC system would be necessary. OSC Mitchell determined that this action to be cost prohibitive and will discuss possible options with the homeowner.

### Next Steps

Discuss next steps with homeowner, including removal and disposal of the mobile home.

### Key Issues

Pervasive mercury contamination throughout the mobile home.

### Estimated Costs \*

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
<b>Extramural Costs</b>				
ERRS - Cleanup Contractor	\$20,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$14,000.00	70.00%
<b>Intramural Costs</b>				
<b>Total Site Costs</b>	\$20,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$14,000.00	70.00%

\* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

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